



Through the involvement of the Indian people in all aspects of education in recent years there have been many significant accomplishments. In 1970, there were almost 200 Indian school committees which had some responsibility for education programs, although this was often minor. By 1980, the following noteworthy accomplishments had taken place:

- Three Indian and Inuit school boards had been created under provincial law: the Cree and Kativik school board operated by The Nishgas of B.C., 450 of the 573 bands administered all or parts of their education programs.
- There were 137 band-operated on-reserve schools, education and maintenance, including post-secondary education and student residences, had grown from \$7 million in 1973-74 to almost \$110 million.

Indian levels of education. For example:

- The number of on-reserve schools offering one or more high school grades rose from 0 to 80 in the last 10 years.
- 2 500 high school students attend these 80 schools.
- Ten years ago only 13.4% (9 614 out of 71 817) of the Indian school population was at the high school level; today 18.2% of the students (14 070 out of 73 280) are at the high school level.

Some Indicators of Progress in Indian Education

Indian Education - Choosing for the Future

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Although it is generally recognized that considerable progress has been made in Indian education over the past few years, it is apparent that both old and new problems still must be solved and a lot of work done to improve the situation even more.

There are four main areas of Indian education that must be looked at:

- quality of Indian education
- local control of education
- funding

Quality of Indian Education

The Indian people and the department agree that the education of Indian children should be based on the idea of parental responsibility and control at the local level. But there are different opinions as to what these ideas mean and how they should be put into practice. The following are some of the problems that have come up:

- Neither the role of the band education authorities nor their relationship to the department and the provincial educational authorities is clearly spelled out;
- The transfer of schools from the department to the band is often difficult because the process for the transfer is not clearly defined and bands are often not well enough prepared to take on the tasks of school administration.

It has proven difficult to attract experienced teachers to band and federal schools and to keep them. This is because recruiting is often late in the federal government and in the band schools, benefit packages are often viewed as less desirable and job security is considered uncertain.

- Because of budget and staff control, teachers in federal and band schools have less support through additional professional training, training for inter-cultural education and classroom consultants' specialized assistance.

Summary of Problem Areas Studied in the Indian Education Paper - Phase I

Another problem affecting the quality of education is that it has been difficult for the department of Indian affairs and the band authorities to influence provincial authorities when tuition agreements for Indian students have been made with them. Provinces care-fully guard the authority the Canadian constitution gives them for education.

Local Control of Indian Education

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What's Next

Further Reading

For an in-depth treatment of the subject of Indian education, it would be advisable to read the document entitled *Indian Education Paper - Phase I*. All band chiefs and councils have copies of this document, as do all regional offices of the department of Indian affairs and northern development.

Consultations

It is important that the department of Indian affairs and northern development knows the views of the Indian people who are most concerned with the education of their children, such as the parents themselves, regarding current needs in education. It is essential that priorities be established so that the most critical needs can be dealt with first. For this reason, consultations are being held between representatives of the department and the Indian people. Express your views during these consultations so that you can help clarify the educational needs of your own community and help set priorities for the Education Program of the department.

During consultations, the discussion points may be used as a focus. They are by no means exhaustive, however, and it should be emphasized that they are not meant to limit the scope of consultations. The 13 guiding principles can also be used as a focus for consultative discussions.

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The provinces have educational systems that provide complete programs and services which are well planned, organized and implemented. The department's education system is administered from national and regional offices which have different functions and responsibilities. The system has neither the staff, the funds, nor the organizational setup to permit as complete and coordinated a program as is possible in the provinces. Problems are made greater by the vast distances separating the areas to be served across Canada. An education system for Indians is unique and complex because it uses federal, band and provincial schools. So far, we have not found a way to combine and coordinate the use of these schools and their services in such a way that they form one integrated Indian education system.

Education Management Framework

Under tuition agreements, provinces or provincial boards are paid tuition fees for Indian students from the reserve attending provincial schools. These contracted agreements with provincial boards are seen as stronger obligations than funding arrangements provided to operate federal and band schools.

- The department's general policy is that no schools shall be built on reserves where the department has an investment in a joint federal/provincial school and the agreement still has some time to run.
- Many Indians feel that, even though the federal government claims to be in favour of Indian control of Indian education, it is not really committed to implementing local control and parental responsibility.
- Because Indian education authorities are not considered as having a legal status under federal legislation, their role in provincial jurisdictions is often not recognized.

Funding

The funding of Indian education is generally considered a major problem. One reason is that the department has not had clearly defined guidelines for funding. The allocation of funds is influenced by many considerations. For instance, the provinces receive from the department the tuition rates they themselves set and these contractual agreements are considered stronger than those established for the federal and band schools. Occasionally, political considerations may determine the amount of money allotted to particular schools.

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Indian Education - Choosing for the Future

Following a review of the education activity conducted by the department of Indian affairs and northern development, a document called *Indian Education Paper - Phase I* was prepared. The paper was printed and circulated across Canada in September 1982. The document, consisting of 52 pages plus 51 pages of appendices, and including 13 principles considered important for a good policy in education, was presented to senior management in the department who approved the guiding principles and the general direction set out in the paper.

In general, the document outlines the history of Indian education, identifies and presents the current problems faced by the Education Program of the department and highlights potential areas of review. While it is hoped that most interested parties will read the education document in its entirety, it is recognized that time constraints and other considerations may make it difficult for many to prepare a document which states the main problems presented in the paper, and suggests some discussion points that can be used for consultation between the Indian people and representatives of the Department.

These consultations should provide us with a clear indication as to the Indian people's views regarding priorities and their preferences as to the order in which the department begins work on the main projects to be undertaken. The consultations also provide the Indian people with the opportunity to make known their most urgent needs and to influence directions for the development of Indian education in the coming months and years.

We trust that you will find this document informative and useful for discussions on the issues raised.

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Thirteen Guiding Principles

Thirteen guiding principles are presented in the *Indian Education Paper - Phase I*. These serve as a guide to the operations of the department's Education Program. The entire education review is based on these principles as is the general orientation proposed by the Education Directorate and accepted by departmental management. Because these principles are considered to be crucial, they are restated and listed here under headings which constitute the four main areas studied in the paper.

Quality of Education

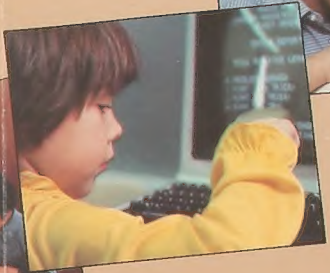
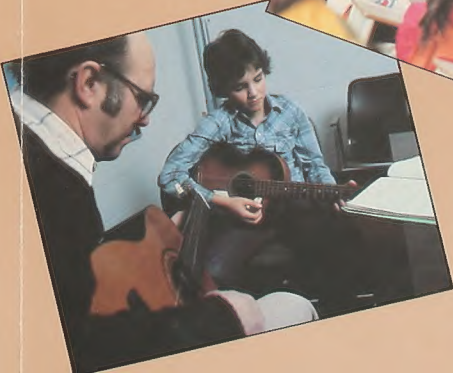
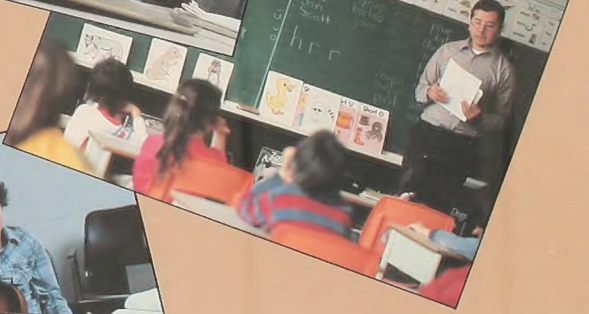
- 1 Indian education strengthens the learner's cultural identity.
- 2 Indian education helps the students develop what are considered the basic learning skills such as language and number work.
- 3 A basic goal of education for Indians is that each student should have the opportunity to achieve to the limit of his or her capabilities.
- 4 Indian education contributes to the development of the community, helping it to meet its social and economic goals. It provides skilled workers for jobs in the community and increases its members' skills so that they can increase their chances for employment.
- 5 The quality of Indian education is in line with Canadian provincial standards, and the department is responsible for ensuring this.
- 6 The standards used for the construction and maintenance of Indian schools are based on those used in the provinces.

Indian Control

- 7 According to the *Indian Act*, the minister is responsible for Indian education and must account to Parliament for the tax monies invested in education and the success rate of the education programs.
- 8 The responsibility for delivering Indian education programs is transferred to the education authorities of the bands in cases where the bands request the transfer, where suitable financial agreements or arrangements are reached and where bands have had the opportunity to develop the necessary managerial skills.
- 9 According to the financial agreements or arrangements, Indian education authorities must account to the minister for all public monies provided.
- 10 Indian education authorities represent the parents in their communities and are responsible to them for setting the educational policies, planning and carrying out the education programs and ensuring the quality of education.
- 11 The department supports a more authoritative role for the Indian community in provincial education systems and greater interaction of Indian and provincial education authorities.

Education Management Framework

- 12 The Indian education system is comprehensive. Services are delivered by a variety of Indian and other education authorities.
- Funding**
- 13 Levels of funding and methods used to determine funding for Indian education can be compared to those used in the provinces with costs added in to allow for the differences of the administration, the design and the provision of educational programs for Indians.



Discussion Points

The following list of discussion points can be used in consultations between the Indian people and representatives of the department of Indian affairs and northern development. They are listed under the general problem area to which they relate.

Quality of Indian Education

- 1 Cultural education has a vital role in programs for Indian students.
- 2 Parents are aware enough as to whether or not their children are receiving a good education.
- 3 Student learning should be measured regularly to ensure that Indian education is moving towards the goals which have been set.
- 4 The teacher is one of the more important factors in quality education.
- 5 Parents have a role to play in their children's school education.
- 6 Changes in current curriculum ought to be made to improve the quality of Indian education.
- 7 Support services should be redesigned according to current needs of Indian students.

Local Control of Indian Education

- 1 It is necessary for each band to come to terms with what "control of education" means.
- 2 What is needed is for Indian people to exert more influence on provincial education authorities.
- 3 The extent to which curriculum can be determined by the school staff should be established.
- 4 Clarification should be made regarding requirements a band should meet in order to take over its education system.
- 5 The role and responsibilities of Indian education authorities and the department of Indian affairs and northern development in all educational programs should be clearly spelled out, even if that requires a change to federal legislation.
- 6 It is necessary for the minister to state those responsibilities he has which cannot be delegated to an Indian education authority.

Education Management Framework

- 1 Greater coordination of the band, federal and provincial school systems should be implemented.
- 2 The federal and band systems should be complete in themselves in that they provide all necessary educational services.

Funding

The funding pattern of Indian education should be closely related to the neighbouring provincial jurisdiction.